



DAWN AWAKENINGS

Awaken to Independence

Spring 2007

POINTS OF INTEREST

- From Exec Director's Desk
 - Juanita Rosa's article—What Would You Do?
 - Shelley Krayner's article - Under Member's Corner: Transportation Shortfall
 - NJ Elks—Handicapped Scholarship Award Application Information
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THANK YOU

First and foremost we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our paid membership for their support. It is through this support and other continuing financial supports that help sustain our programs.

We would also like to thank the following Grantors, for without their assistance we would not be able to continue serving our catchment's area of Morris, Sussex and Warren counties.

- State of NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- State of NJ Disability Services—Traumatic Brain Injury Fund
- United Way of Morris County
- County of Warren
- State of NJ Dept of Education

DAWN employees are especially appreciative to the White Family and Access Intelligence whose donation furnished our new office with desks, file cabinets, conference room table / chairs and credenzas. But before we could even move in the Aktion Club members volunteered to help paint the new space thus helping to ease our move into the new office.

We also had some great technical assistance. Thank you Nick from Computer Town for assisting in the set-up / networking of the computers; and individuals from Schering Plough Corp for their computer savvy and program assistance and patience with us non-techies.

And to Peggy Heyderhoff for holiday decorations, chairs for our lobby, table and chairs for our picnic area, thank you.

WELCOME TO DAWN'S NEWEST EMPLOYEES

We would like to take this opportunity to give a warm welcome to two employees who have recently come on board. Marie Manzi handles the Care Management and ADRC (Aging & Disabled Resource Connection) for Warren County out of the Washington office. And Tamara Siegel is our Benefits Specialist and is also the Disability Services Coordinator for Warren County Disability Advisory Council.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Happy Spring to All! It has been quite some time since you have received a newsletter from us mainly due to the fact that we have been so busy getting settled in our new space.

For those of you who have not been here yet, I encourage you to come in and visit. Not only do we have larger space for staff but we also have a community room available filled with resources and materials pertaining to all disability issues. The room also has two computers with internet access which are available to anyone who is interested and we will shortly have a computer set up with JAWS for people who are visually impaired to use.

The room is open to the public and has a wealth of informational materials that may be of interest to you. I encourage you to come in and make use of the space and the technology.

There are a few upcoming events and activities I would like you all to keep in mind and participate in. First, if you were at our annual meeting, you heard me speak about an award DAWN was going to implement in honor of our founding board member, "Christine Crawn Schnorr." In the next few months, you will be receiving further information about nominations for the award. The award will be presented to a DAWN member who has been a strong self-advocate. Please start to think about your fellow members and who may be a good candidate for nomination. More information will follow regarding the criteria for nominations and timeframes. The award will be presented at our Annual meeting in November.

Also, the Abilities Expo is scheduled for April 27—29 at the Convention Center in Edison, NJ. If you are interested in attending and need a ride, call your local Para transit company and let them know. County Para transit providers should accommodate you. If you have a problem getting transportation from them, let us know.

Finally, this edition includes DAWN's request for volunteers as well as our wish list. These sections will be posted in each newsletter so you can have an opportunity to support the agency in a way that is possible for you. We are very anxious to implement both the friendly caller hotline as well as the ADA site reviewers program. If you can help in anyway, call the office and let the staff know what you are interested in doing.

Best Regards to All,
Carmela

WISH LIST

As a non-profit we depend upon the generosity of our members and the community we serve. So our moving into a new office has given us more room in which to hold meetings but has added a new dimension to the requirements for the space; thus the wish list.

We are seeking the following items in either new or in very good condition:

- DAWN Outdoor Sign/DVD Player
- Power Point Presentation Projectors/Folding Chairs
- Folding Card Tables
- Floor Mats / Runners/Cabinet (Pantry Type) for the Kitchen

- Printer (s)
- Couch (Love Seat)
- Arm Chairs
- Wall Hangings
- Canister Vacuum

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? – Juanita Rosa

Picture it. A nice spring day. You are out tooling around town using your mobility device. Suddenly, a car goes racing by and splashes your shoes with that nice spring mud puddle. “Oh well,” you think. “I needed new shoes anyway.” So off you go in search of new shoes; spirits not dampened by the shower. While window shopping you locate the perfect replacement footwear. You decide to go in and try them on. But when you get to the door you discover there is a threshold too big for you to overcome with your mobility device. As you contemplate your dilemma a passerby asks if you would like some assistance. What do you do?

The Americans with Disabilities Act states that people with disabilities must have equal access to places of public accommodation as people without disabilities. People who operate these places have a responsibility to look at their accessibility annually and determine what improvements can be made. However, improvements that would incur undue hardship or great expense do not have to be made if the business owner can not afford it. So what is the answer?

Back to the scenario. Ask the kind stranger to go inside and tell the manager you would like to speak to him/her. When the manager arrives explain the problem. Nicely. Tell him/her you would like to make a purchase at the establishment but was unable to gain entry. Suggest possible low cost solutions to the barrier. Again, be nice. Most people will be more receptive when they don't feel put on the defensive.

Next, if the manager is not receptive to the suggestions or states that he/she is not responsible for these issues, ask for the name and address of the owner of the building or another responsible party. This information should be provided to you without a problem. If you encounter a problem, get the exact address and call the local tax office. They will tell you who owns the property.

Then write a letter. Explain what happened when you tried to access the store. Offer the same suggestions that were given to the person you spoke to. If available include a copy of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II on Public Accommodation. This document will back up what you are asking for; equal access. After mailing the letter wait two full weeks for a response.

If after two weeks you do not receive a response you can do one or both of the following. First, you can file a complaint with the United States Department of Justice. They are the enforcing agency of the ADA. Or, second, you can start collecting receipts from places that you have shopped that were accessible or that made accommodations to serve you, then **SEND THESE RECEIPTS TO THE OFFENDING ESTABLISHMENT TO SHOW HOW MUCH BUSINESS THEY ARE LOSING!** Get your friends to do the same. “The bottom line” is very important to all business owners.

As a person with a disability you are entitled to the same access as everybody else. Don't be afraid to exercise your right to equality.

“That which we persist in doing becomes easier, not that the task itself has become easier, but our ability to perform it has improved.”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

AARP & HOME DEPOT

Home Depot stores have teamed up with AARP to help get products and designs out to the people. The idea is to help them remain in their own homes by making the home more accessible through the home improvement products and designs. This is being done on a trial basis and will include sponsor workshops at approximately 100 Home Depot stores across the country.

Check out your local store. See if they are one of the 100, if they are take advantage of the workshops.

SINGLE USE MEDICAL DEVICES

Patient Guard is a New Jersey-based coalition dedicated to raising awareness among patients, medical professionals and the public about the health risks associated with the reprocessing and reuse of invasive single-use medical devices (SUD's).

Single-use medical devices are instruments that are designed and manufactured to be used on a patient once and then thrown away. These used devices are being reprocessed... and used on another patient. As a result of this practice, unsuspecting patients face the added risks of disease transmission from an improperly sterilized instrument (such as breathing tubes, surgical blades, forceps and other medical devices) and reduced functionality of the device caused by harsh reprocessing procedures. Federal regulators say reprocessing is safe, but original device manufacturers say they can't guarantee recycled products will work correctly. Furthermore, this practice offers no medical or financial benefit to patients in exchange for assuming these additional risks. You may elect to not have reprocessed single-use devices used in your medical care. Complete and present a Single-use Medical Device Instruction Form to your Physician or Hospital. For form go to www.patientguard.org

MEDICARE D

It is believed only 5% of recipients will take advantage of the open enrollment period when beneficiaries are permitted to switch plans or to enroll in a plan if they failed to do so initially. This open enrollment period runs from November 15th to December 31st and will occur every year during this time frame. It is important that every beneficiary compare plans and choose the best plan for their needs as there may be a plan that can save money, provide more for drugs and has lower co-pays.

SUSSEX COUNTY HOMELESS CALLS

In order to assure that services to Sussex County residents continue after the Help Line stops answering calls, the Samaritan Inn has set up a system to handle adult homeless emergencies after the office is closed. Effective immediately these services can be accessed by calling 973 827-8911.

TRAVEL TIPS

Summer will soon be upon us and people are gearing up to tackle their vacation planning. Some things you may want to consider:

- Flying—book a long layover time if you are in a wheelchair and do not have a direct flight. This will give you time to go from one gate to another.
- Hotels—call ahead to confirm room reservations (accessibility). Get the name of the person you contacted and a confirmation number.
- Sailing—book in advance with the cruise line’s special services department.
- Ask for help if needed.
- Explain what your needs are and make sure the person understands.
- Know your rights and be prepared for any situation.

STEPS FOR PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

Know what kind of disasters could happen in your neighborhood. Understand that certain resources or utilities may not be available, which could hamper your independence. Undertake a personal assessment. Decide what you will be able to do for yourself and what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster.

Create a personal support network of family, friends, etc. Discuss your special needs with them, including evacuation plans and medical information lists.

Create an emergency information & medical information list. Include the names and numbers of contacts including out-of-towners. The names and numbers of your doctors, medications with dosage instructions and health conditions.

Keep at least a seven-day supply of medications on hand.

Install at least one smoke/carbon monoxide alarm on each level of your home and test them once a month.

Know the location of and how or when to disconnect the main utility cutoff valves. Identify evacuation routes and safe places to go during a disaster.

Keep a 7-day supply kit in your home or anywhere you spend your time. Include food, water first aid kit, adaptive equipment, batteries and supplies for your pets or service animals.

UNITED WAY & FAMILY WIZE

The United Way is participating in a national Family Wize / United Way partnership to provide prescription drug discount cards to people with no prescription drug coverage.

Please contact the United Way agency nearest you to find out where to get your free FamilyWize prescription drug discount card. These cards are being distributed through participating United Way partner agencies and other organizations in their area.

It's Free: There is no cost to you for this donated card.

It's Easy: Simply present your card and prescription to a participating pharmacy to obtain the discounted price. You always receive the lower of the discounted price or pharmacy's retail price.

No Restrictions: Use your card as often as you need, for any prescription, for everyone in your family there is no age limit.

Savings: The card can save you and your family an average of 20% on eight out of ten prescriptions.

Not Health Insurance: Discounts available at participating pharmacies only. But this program can be used to obtain savings on prescription drugs that are excluded by your Insurance plan or are not covered because you have exceeded your Insurance Plan's maximum limits.

For more information visit

NJ ELKS—HANDICAPPED SCHOLARSHIP AWARD AVAILABLE

The NJ State Elks Special Children's Committee has announced that their Scholarship Award is now available. Any and all handicapped high school seniors, who will be furthering their education, are qualified to respond.

Two awards will be awarded to one male and one female. These are four-year scholarships worth up to \$2,500 per year. They will be judged based upon the student's academic record and financial need. Applications complete with directions and rules for filing can be obtained by contacting James Kopcho at James.Kopcho@dhs.state.nj.us or by writing to the New Jersey State Elks Special Children's Committee P O Box 1596, Woodbridge, New Jersey 07095-1596 or by calling 732-326-1300 (voice). All applications must be completed in its entirety and returned to this address by Monday, April 16, 2007 to be considered.

MEMBER'S CORNER

Transportation Shortfall

An issue that is very close to my heart has been rearing its ugly head of late. That is the lack of adequate public transportation services for persons with disabilities. I left New Jersey in 1996, after having lived here since I was born in 1959. Going through "the system" before the ADA, I experienced the segregation of being with other physically challenged individuals until I was mainstreamed in mid-1972. Throughout this time, there had been failed attempts to get a bus-line to run through East Hanover. Now, New Jersey Transit has a route up and down Route 10, however the nearest bus stop is more than 3/4 mile away from my house. What happens to those of us who live on the outskirts of town? We have lives also that cannot be put on hold just because we do not and cannot drive a car. The world seems to cater to physically independent people and cares very little about another important segment of the population--the one that has a better attendance record when getting to work.

I'm off on a tangent, sorry. The issue here is availing adequate transportation services to those in need. Paratransit services are still delivered on a hierarchical basis, which in itself is not essentially negative; however, the placement of so-called "social and recreational" trips at a lower point on the hierarchy is troubling; also, the lead time to schedule rides: at least two (2) weeks. This may be marginally acceptable for medical appointments and maybe even educational concerns, but as far as employment, a person must be able to get to

work every day. Does that have to be "scheduled" also? Scheduling hours are another issue. The Paratransit wants you to have appointments between 10 AM-2 PM. I don't know about anyone else, but my life events cannot be pigeonholed between these hours. We have enough limitations put on our time without having to schedule our appointments between these particular hours. They should be extended to at least a regular workday schedule; yet another disincentive to work, like Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or any other service or program that discourages individuals from becoming as mainstreamed, as "normal" as possible.

If my understanding of policy is flawed, I apologize. I just feel that with the advent of the ADA, physically challenged individuals such as myself should have the opportunities that were outlined in this legislation, otherwise known as "The Civil Rights Act for People with Disabilities."

WEB-SITES & UP-COMING EVENTS

Housing

A Listing of NJ affordable housing by county. www.nj.gov/dca/codes/affdhsguide/ahg.shtml

Employment

An employment website for people with disabilities. Free to job seekers www.hireDS.com

Agency Information

The Greater North Jersey Chapter of Multiple Sclerosis Society www.njbnmss.org
ADA Business connection—"Expanding Your Market" is a new series of concise, easily reproducible documents about 'bottom-line' benefits for businesses that provide accessibility to customers with disabilities. There is also a new online course for businesses called Reaching Out to Customers with Disabilities a new web-based interactive online course that explains the ADA and how it applies to businesses. These series can be ordered through the ADA Information Line or downloaded from the ADA Business Connection page on the Department's ADA Website: www.ada.gov

Upcoming Events

Polio Network of New Jersey will be holding its 17th annual conference on Sunday, May 6th at the Bridgewater Marriott Hotel.

There will be top-notch speakers such as Dr. John R. Bach, Pulmonary Specialist; James Weisman, Esq. general counsel of United Spinal Asso. and an expert on the Americans with Disabilities Act; and Linda Wheeler-Donahue, President of the Polio Outreach of Connecticut.

The program committee is finalizing several afternoon workshop presentations. Watch for information on the PNNJ website: www.njpolio.org

DAWN's Annual Picnic will be held on Saturday, July 14th from 12:00-4:00 p.m. at Heddon Park Pavilion in Randolph.

The 2007 Abilities Expo at the New Jersey Convention And Expo Center in Edison is open from 10-6 on April 27 & 28 from 11-5 p.m. April 29th.

Volunteer Opportunities

DAWN has the following opportunities for qualified people who are interested in volunteering their time and in some instances their energy. If you, or anyone you know of, are interested in any of the following positions, please contact the DAWN office at (973) 625-1940.

- Board Members
- Web Master
- Assist at Community Based Events—Youth or Adult
- IT Consultant
- Friendly Caller
- Data Entry
- Newsletter Publisher
- Mailing Assistant
- Handyman—for Painting and Other Odd Jobs
- Promotional Mgmt
- Site Reviewers—Review public places, and report to staff regarding access.

Volunteers will be trained on ADA compliance and procedures for notification of businesses regarding noncompliance.



Phone: 973-625-1940
Fax: 973-625-1942
TTY: 973-625-1932
Email: info@dawncil.org

We are on the web!
www.dawncil.org
Follow us on
Twitter@DAWNcil

DAWN MISSION STATEMENT

DAWN Center for Independent Living empowers people with disabilities to strive for equality and to take control of their own lives by:

- Providing the tools that encourage independence and self-advocacy.
- Promoting public awareness of the needs, desires and rights of individuals living with disabilities.
- Offering community activities that create new experiences and opportunities.
- Creating informed communities that advance the Independent Living Philosophy.

DAWN PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

- Information and Referral
- Living Well with a Disability
- Next Chapter Book Club
- Aktion Club (Morris County only)
- Nursing Facility Transition
- Independent Living Skills Training
- School to Adult Life (*STEP-UP* Program)
- Advocacy
- Peer Support
- Recreation
- SAIL
- Care Management